

Chocolate – Depression association a myth

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Whenever an individual have depression, it stands in the way of daily life and normal functioning in such a way that person feel pain and also those who care for him. It is a psychiatric disorder not a sign of weakness and need treatment to come out of it. Person experience continuous feeling of sadness being anxious guilty, irritable, restless with aches and pains, fatigue and disturbed sleep or appetite. Person can have diagnosable depressive disorder like major depression, persistent depression, psychotic depression, postpartum depression, seasonal depression and bipolar depression.

Different persons suffering from depression have different symptom pattern.

Women typically have symptoms of sadness, worthlessness and guilt while Males experience it as feeling of worthlessness, fatigue, irritable, loss of interest in pleasurable activities and tendency towards alcohol or drugs use.

In children before puberty the present as pretending to be sick refusal to go to school clinging to pattern for high level of anxiety and the teens have trouble at school irritable become negative and feel misunderstood, feel sulk. During old age, happy down and sleep troubles more tired irritable.

Atypical depression present as hypersomnia, hyperphagia, lethargy, sensitive to rejection. Tend to have over eating with preference for sweets and chocolates. Chocolates contain caffeine which acts as brain stimulator and bring state of alertness. Caffeine acts by blocking an inhibitory neurotransmitter called adenosine, which induces sleep.

A dark chocolate of 100 mg contains 48 mg of caffeine teenagers between 13 to 18 years can take caffeine upto 100mg, 200 mg in pregnant women and 400 mg in healthy adults.

Based on this clearly visible association between chocolate and depression various studies were done and one of them by Natalie Rose et al they studied 1080 persons.

They observe the frequency of chocolate consumption in depressed patients and were screened by CES-D a screening tool and found that there is no association of caffeine consumption with depression.

The provided possible explanation for this non association as during depression

1. The chocolate use can be a type of self treatment to get relief from depressive symptoms.

2. Depression may induce chocolate craving with unknown reasons and without treatment.
3. The possibility that chocolate may contribute to depressed mood.
4. Physiological factors for example oxidative stress could bring out both depression and chocolate craving

To distinguish among these possibilities more studies needed.

Women with free Pre-Menstrual Syndrome (PMS) have tendency to use chocolate but no strong association found in research studies.

More studies are required to determine the role of chocolate- depression association as a cause or treatment for depression.

Individual with depression at present are treated with antidepressant medication and different types of psychotherapies under the supervision of Psychiatry team.